

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 1725

LIMDIS

FOR ASST SECY HARTMAN.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, PINT, IT

SUBJECT: ASST SECY HARTMANS MEETING WITH PIERO OTTONE

REF A. HARTMAN-FINA MEMCON SEPT 20, B. MILANS 1713

1. OTTONE ARRIVING NY SEPT 21 AND STAYING AT PIERRE THROUGH 23 AND IN WASHINGTON SEPT 24. REACHABLE IN NY CARE OF UGO STILLE AT OFFICES CORRIERE DELLA SERA. WASHINGTON SCHEDULE MADE BY STILLE INCLUDES MORNING MEETING AT BROOKINGS, LUNCH AT WASHINGTON POST AND APPOINTMENTS AT DEPT AFTER 1600 INCLUDING WITH DI SCIULLO, INR.

2. OTTONE WILL CALL HARTMAN AT WALDORF TOWERS TO ARRANGE APPOINTMENT IN NY. SPEAKS FLUENT ENGLISH.

3. PURPOSE OF TRIP UNCLEAR TO ME. OTTONE SAYS HE ACCOMPANYING CORRIERE OWNER RIZZOLI WHO HAS NY BUSINESS. PARTY ALSO INCLUDES ECONOMIST GAETANO LICARDO. IN WASHINGTON, OTTONE SAYS HE WANTS TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC SITUATION AND ITALY.

4. SINCE NEW RIVAL DAILY TRYING TO RECRUIT CORRIERE'S STAR FOREIGN CORRESPONDANT, STILLE, RIZZOLI AND OTTONE MAY BE TRYING DISSUADE
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HIM. OR THERE MAY ALSO BE DEAL AFOOT TO FIND US FINANCING FOR SERIOUSLY

AILING CORRIERE. CAVEAT EMPTOR.

5. BACKGROUND STILLE'S POSSIBLE DEPARTURE FROM CORRIERE REPORTED MILAN'S 1713, ESP. PARAS 7 AND 8.

6. OTTONE IS PROBABLY BASICALLY SOCIAL DEMOCRAT IN POLITICS AND, IN MY VIEW, ANTI-COMMUNIST BUT NO AMERICANOPHILE. HE IS WEAK ON ECONOMICS AND THIS MAY HELP ACCOUNT FOR UNADULTERATED EXTREME LEFT ORIENTATION OF CORRIERE'S ECONOMIC PAGES. ALMOST NO NEWS ABOUT OR FROM US ON ECONOMIC MATTERS FAILS TO PUT US IN WORST POSSIBLE LIGHT. OTHER SECTIONS OF CORRIERE ARE MORE UNEVEN WITH SPRINKLING OF PRO-ATLANTIC STORIES IN CONTRAST TO PRIMARILY FAR LEFT, NEUTRALIST OR PRO-SOVIET ORIENTATION OF OTHERS.

7. THIS MARKED LEFT ORIENTATION LED TO MAJOR DEFECTION OF STAFF IN 1974 TO FORM ANTI-CORRIERE DAILY IL GIORNALE AND CORRIERE NOW GENERALLY CONSIDERED AS FELLOW-TRAVELLER. HOWEVER, PRO-COMMUNIST LINE APPEARS LARGELY IMPOSED BY COMMUNIST CONTROLLED TYPOGRAPHICAL WORKERS PLUS LARGELY PRO-COMMUNIST EDITORIAL STAFF OVER WHICH OTTONE AND OWNER RIZZOLI HAVE LITTLE OR NO CONTROL ACCORDING TO OTTONE AS WELL AS OUTSIDE OBSERVERS. IN ANY EVENT, CORRIERE CONTINUES TO BE ITALY'S SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT AND WIDELY READ DAILY.

8. REAL OWNER OF CORRIERE IS PETROCHEMICAL BARON EUGENIO CEFIS, HEAD OF GIANT MONTECATINI CONGLOMERATE OF MORE THAN 400 FIRMS. CEFIS GAVE RIZZOLI CREDIT LINE TO FINANCE PURCHASE OF CORRIERE WHICH THIS YEAR WILL LOSE ABOUT \$33 MILLION. WHETHER HE CAN OR DOES EXERT ANY INFLUENCE ON EDITORIAL POLICY IS WELL KEPT SECRET BUT OTTONE INSISTS THAT NEITHER RIZZOLI NOR CEFIS HAVE EVER TRIED TO TELL

HIM WHAT POSITION TO TAKE. MORE CYNICAL THEORY IS THAT CEFIS HAS FOOT IN BOTH CAMPS OWNING BOTH CORRIERE AND RIGHT CENTER GIORNALE.

9. DURING JUNE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, CORRIERE WAS ONE OF MOST DEVASTATING CRITICS OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WITH BARRAGE OF REVELATIONS OF DC CORRUPTION AND MALGOVERNO.

10. AFTER ELECTION OTTONE TOLD ME THAT COMMUNIST GAINS FAR
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EXCEEDED HIS EXPECTATION OR DESIRE AND SAID CORRIERE WOULD BEGIN CAMPAIGN TO DEMYSTIFY COMMUNISTS AND EXPLAIN THREAT THEY POSED. ALTHOUGH SOME SIGNS OF SUCH APPROACH BECAME EVIDENT, HANDLING OF COMMUNIST TACTICS IN PORTUGAL WAS MORE PRO-COMMUNIST THAN OBJECTIVE AND LED TO ANOTHER CLAMORUS STAFF RESIGNATION. GOSSIP HAS IT THAT COMMUNIST TYPOGRAPHERS DICTATED LINE ON PORTUGAL. MORE RECENTLY, HOWEVER, WORD IS GETTING AROUND THAT CORRIERE IS SHIFTING MORE TOWARD CENTER. THAT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH ITS COMPLETELY NON-

COMMITAL REPORTING OF AMBASSADORS EPOCA INTERVIEW. BUT IF THERE HAS BEEN A SHIFT, IT IS VERY SUBTLE AND, IN VIEW COMMUNIST CONTROL OF STAFF, UNLIKELY TO GO VERY FAR WITHOUT FIREWORKS THAT NOT YET SEEN.

11. AS FAR AS I KNOW, OTTONE HAS HAD VERY LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN US ALTHOUGH HE WAS FOREIGN CORRESPONDANT IN BOTH LONDON AND MOSCOW. THE ONE VISIT THAT HE HAS DESCRIBED DID NOT IMPROVE HIS ATTITUDE SINCE HE VISITED VERMONT TO OBSERVE RURAL PROVERTY DURING THE SPRING THAW.

12. ANY ENCOURAGEMENT YOU CAN GIVE OTTONE TO TAKE MORE OBJECTIVE LINE MIGHT HELP. WE DID NOT DISCUSS GROUND RULES FOR YOUR MEETING BUT I ASSUME THAT OTTONE HAS NO INTENTION OF WRITING ANYTHING SINCE AS EDITOR, HE NEVER DOES SO. IN ANY EVENT, HIS PERSONAL VIEWS ON ITALIAN SITUATION WELL WORTH HAVING AND WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY FEED BACK ON HIS POSITION THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO SHARE.FINA

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